



ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday 20 March 2024 at 6.00 pm in Council Chamber, Third Floor, Southwater One, Telford, TF3 4JG

Present: Councillors M Boylan (Chair), P Davis (Vice-Chair), T L B Janke, I Preece, H Morgan, T J Nelson and H Rhodes

Also Present: Councillor C Healy (Cabinet Member: Climate Action, Green Spaces, Heritage & Leisure)

In Attendance: E Cantillion (Project Co-Ordinator, Shropshire Good Food Partnership), E Harvey (Lead Lawyer: Property and Commercial, Telford & Wrekin Council), I Wykes (Team Leader: Climate Change and Sustainability, Telford & Wrekin Council), P Starkey (Senior Democracy Officer (Scrutiny), Telford & Wrekin Council) and S Yarnall (Democracy Officer (Scrutiny), Telford & Wrekin Council).

ENVSC24 Declarations of Interest

None.

ENVSC25 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

ENVSC26 Telford and Wrekin Council Becoming Carbon Neutral and Plastic Free Update

The Climate Change & Sustainability Team Leader presented Members with an update on the Council's efforts to becoming Carbon Neutral and Plastic Free. The report which was presented to Cabinet on 19 October 2023 highlighted the Council's decision to declare a climate emergency in 2019 and that by 2030 the Council would be Carbon Neutral and Plastic Free. The report also outlined that the Council was on target to have a 70% reduction in carbon emissions and plastic use by 2027. Members were presented with a number of examples of work that the Council had recently undertaken to reduce carbon emissions including decarbonising Oakengates leisure centre, the installation of 140 electric vehicle charging points and retrofit of facilities such as the swimming pool in Newport which had reduced gas usage by 40%.



Members were informed of future projects including work to secure funding to support the retrofit of sites across Wellington. Officers were also supporting residents across the Borough to cut down their carbon emissions through the provision of LED lightbulbs. The report also highlighted that this goal was beyond just the Council's emissions but also aimed to support residents across the Borough to reduce their emissions and would further supports the Climate Change Adaptation Plan due to be presented at a meeting of Full Council in late2024 and the Corporate Risk Register to support with both adaptation and mitigation.

Following the presentation of the report, Members posed the following questions:

Were residents, Ward Members and Parish/Town Councils consulted on the development of the 140 electric vehicle charging spaces across the Borough?

Officers noted Members comments on the difficulties that the planned charging locations had presented and advised that further discussions with Members could take place to find the best solution.

How much engagement has there been with Town and Parish Councils regarding the plastic free agenda?

Officers were unable to provide full details at the time of the meeting but that they were still actively working on the plastic free agenda. Work was ongoing to support Town and Parish Councils to be accredited and there were currently three Councils with the accreditation. The Cabinet Member: Climate Action, Green Spaces, Heritage & Leisure said that the Council had been one of the first to declare the ambition to be plastic free and work was being undertaken to provide information to Town and Parish Councils on how to reduce plastic usage.

Could plans be implemented to include electric charging points at leisure centres?

Members were informed that the funding application required the charging points to be near residential areas.

Members commented on the positive work that had taken place with electric vehicle charging points and the work undertaken so far to reduce the level of carbon emissions within the Borough.

What were the costs for installing electric vehicle charging points?

The 140 charging points were out for tender and Officers would work with suppliers to share the cost information.



Following the discussion, Members voted on the recommendation outlined in the report.

RESOLVED – that the update on Telford and Wrekin Council Becoming Carbon Neutral and Plastic Free, be noted and reviewed by the Environment Scrutiny Committee.

Councillors T J Nelson and I Preece left the meeting at 6:36pm.

ENVSC27 Shropshire Good Food - 12 Month Review

Members received an update from Emma Cantillion, Project Co-ordinator of the Shropshire Good Food Partnership. This followed a request from the Committee to receive a 12 month update on the work of the Partnership, following the Committee's last briefing on 28 February 2023.

The presentation set out the work of the Partnership, discussed Food Systems Thinking and actions taken locally and next steps for the Partnership and the Council. Members were informed of the ongoing work of the partnership which included work with Food Banks and Food Hubs across Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin. Work had been ongoing with Harper Adams University to support 'Freshers', first year students, to use local produce and to provide them with the skills needed to cook good quality food for £2.50. One of the largest projects highlighted to Members was the Shropshire Food Trail. This project to helped support local businesses that produce high quality and sustainable food goods across the county. Recently, a £100,000 grant had been made available under the Let's Go Zero Scheme to support local schools to be mentors in reducing levels of carbon emissions and a school in Hollinswood was identified as a flagship school to pilot the project.

Following the presentation, Members posed the following questions and comments.

A local resident discussed setting up a community space to grow local produce and to get the community involved, what was the best way to support them and provide further information?

Currently, there was no policy in Telford & Wrekin Council to set up schemes as described but rather to support on a case by case basis. The Partnership was able to offer support to those residents who had contacted them.

Does the Partnership engage with Town and Parish Councils?



The representative from the Partnership said that they would share the information about the upcoming Food Trail with Members along with the information for Town and Parish Councils to be involved.

There had been a request from the Vegetarian Society to promote the National Vegetarian week in October and this was being discussed with Officers. Members highlighted the positive work regarding this but discussed caution to avoid misinterpretation of the message put out on social media channels.

The Project Co-ordinator highlighted that it was previously requested that there would be representation from the Council on the Partnership's Board. The Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) informed the Project Co-ordinator that this had been feedback to the relevant Officers and the Partnership would be contacted in due course.

Members commended the work of the Partnership to promote sustainable food, local businesses and reducing carbon emissions across the county.

Following this, Members moved and voted on the following recommendation regarding a standing item to be added to invite the Partnership for a regular update.

RESOLVED – that a regular update from the Shropshire Good Food Partnership as a standing item for future work programmes of the Committee be included.

ENVSC28 Work Programme Review

The Democracy Officer (Scrutiny) informed the Committee that this was the last meeting of the 2023/24 municipal year. Scrutiny now operates with two-year work programme to allow for more in-depth work to take place. Members were informed that some items had been programmed to go forward into the next municipal year including an update on electric vehicle charging points. Proposed changes to the work programme would be discussed at the next Keeping in Touch meeting with the Chair and Officers and the Committee would be updated in due course.

ENVSC29 Chair's Update

The Chair wanted to thank Officers and Members for their work over the past year. The Chair reminded the Committee of the upcoming site visit to the Severn Trent Treatment Plant and highlighted the hard work of Members at the recent Climate Change Adaptation workshop.

The meeting ended at 7.17 pm



Telford & Wrekin
Co-operative Council

**Protect, care and invest
to create a better borough**

Chairman:

Date: Wednesday 9 October 2024